

[Enough] by **MithrilWren**

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Summary:

If you could choose a different path, Joyce, would you have chosen this life?

[Enough]

You've got this thought in your mind, as you bounce one boy on your hip and watch the other trundle around the playground at breakneck speed, darting beneath beams and around polypropylene rope, flitting like a bird in and out of eyeline.

It won't get better than this.

It's not a joyful thought, nor does it set your heart racing at the prospect. It's the simple truth, and as the years roll by it settles deeper into your bones, casts a tint of grey in the underside of split ends shorn by your own hand. You feel your eyes alight when you look at them, your two boys, growing taller every day. It's the one bright spot in a field of mist covering the vision of the future you had at 14.

Jonathan has Lonnie's features, but not his makeup. When he comes home crying with blood on his hands you have never been more angry, or more proud.

It's Will who keeps you up at night, with bruises on shoulders too small to hold this kind of hurt. They tell you that he's asking for trouble, being the way he is. You were told the same, once upon a time. You got into trouble, so much trouble, and now you have no education and mounting debt and a worthless, deadbeat ex to show for it. But you also have Jonathan and Will, and that's all that matters in the end.

Your mother asks you, not unkindly, if you regret it. You are 17, belly-heavy, and you don't know how to answer. What is *it*? Your life is what it is by circumstance, true, but also by choice. Could you unmake yourself to choose a new path? Is it worth sacrificing all of *it* to see the untrodden road?

Jonathan's grubby hands are on your knees, staining the old jeans red with damp clay. It's going to rain again soon, and you cover his shaggy head with a bright yellow hood, and hug Will tighter to your chest. You can't give them riches, but you can shelter them from the cold.

It won't get better than this.

And this is what you have, and it is enough.